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**oSIST prEN 17984-2:2024**  
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**Psi pomočniki - 2. del: Doživljenska dobrobit psa**

Assistance Dogs — Part 2: Dog Lifetime Welfare

Assistenzhunde - Lebenslanges Wohlergehen von Hunden

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English Version

## Assistance dogs - Part 2: Dog lifetime welfare

Assistenzhunde - Lebenslanges Wohlergehen von  
Hunden

This draft European Standard is submitted to CEN members for enquiry. It has been drawn up by the Technical Committee CEN/TC 452.

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION  
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**prEN 17984-2:2024 (E)****European foreword**

This document (prEN 17984-2:2024) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 452 “Assistance dogs”, the secretariat of which is held by UNI.

This document is currently submitted to the CEN Enquiry.

This document is part of a series of standards under the general title *Assistance Dogs*, which will comprise the following parts:

- *Part 1: Vocabulary*
- *Part 2: Dog lifetime welfare*
- *Part 3: Competencies for assistance dogs’ professionals*
- *Part 4: Training and assessment*
- *Part 5: Client services*
- *Part 6: Accessibility and universal access*
- *Part 7: Conformity assessment*

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## Introduction

Lifetime encompasses the whole life course of the animal from pre-birth to old age and death. Accommodating the welfare of the dog is not only a legal requirement, but fundamental to the ethical basis of being a responsible custodian. This holds true for the breeder, trainer, owner/handler of a working dog, or of a retired dog and any other person who has temporary or permanent care of the dog.

This document provides an overview of the requirements that should be met in respect to welfare.

Following contemporary scientific thinking, lifetime welfare of assistance dogs should provide each individual at all life stages with a Good Life. This means that the dog's caretaker should aim to comply fully with best practice recommendations for dog welfare that are well above the minimum standards. The management of the dog should focus both on the minimization of negative experiences and the provision of opportunities for positive experiences.

To achieve this objective, this document uses the Five Domains Paradigm (Mellor, 2016; Mellor, 2016b; 2020, Littlewood and Mellor, 2016).

Detailed guidelines regarding each section will be provided as supplementary material.

In defining, advising about, and assessing welfare, this document relies heavily on the Five Freedoms as proposed by the UK by Brambell (1965) namely: freedom from hunger and thirst; from discomfort; from pain, injury and disease; from fear and distress and the freedom to express normal behaviour. It is still commonly considered that providing for an animal's welfare is simply ensuring that these freedoms are met, that negative states such as pain, fear and distress are minimized, and that the animal has the opportunity to perform normal behaviours, such as general maintenance behaviours of moving, stretching, and grooming. However, this is limited both in understanding of what good welfare is and how it can be assessed (Mellor, 2016, 2020).

While these five freedoms acknowledge that animals are sentient and capable of feeling pain and other negative emotions, simply avoiding such states does not ensure that an animal has a life worth living, let alone a good life (Mellor, 2016). Good welfare and having a life worth living depends on the animal experiencing positive emotions, e.g. pleasure, confidence, interest, and a sense of control over its environment with opportunities to explore, solve problems and gain sufficient physical and mental rest (Mellor and Beausoleil, 2015; Mellor, 2016b, 2020). Age-related changes may impact the animal's ability to experience positive welfare, and this should be taken into consideration in the management of older dogs.

To ensure welfare, caretakers should have current knowledge and competency in welfare, ethology, learning theory and practical dog training. The dog's welfare should be informally monitored continuously by the caretaker. The dog's welfare should be formally assessed on a regular basis by appropriately trained person or persons. This includes assessment of all five domains of welfare (Table 1).

Table 1 — Five Provisions and Welfare Aims adapted from Mellor 2020

Domain	Provision	Animal Welfare Aim
<b>1. Nutrition</b>	Provide ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour	<i>Minimize</i> thirst and hunger and <i>enable</i> eating to be a pleasurable experience
<b>2. Physical Environment</b>	Provide shade/shelter or suitable housing, good air quality and comfortable resting areas	<i>Minimize</i> discomfort and exposure and <i>promote</i> thermal, physical, and other comforts
<b>3. Health</b>	Prevent or rapidly diagnose and treat disease and injury, and foster good muscle tone, posture, and cardiorespiratory function	<i>Minimize</i> breathlessness, nausea, pain, and other aversive experiences and <i>promote</i> the pleasures of robustness, vigour, strength and well-coordinated physical activity
<b>4. Behavioural Interactions</b>	Provide stimulating and engaging environment, friendly and playful companions as well as empathic, knowledgeable, and skilful people	<i>Minimize</i> threats and unpleasant restriction on all kinds of behavioural interactions and <i>promote</i> engagement in rewarding activities
<b>5. Mental State/Affects</b>	Provide safe, congenial and species (and breed) appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences	<i>Promote</i> various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence, and a sense of control

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## 1 Scope

The purpose of this document is to protect the welfare of assistance dogs. For this, it sets out requirements based on the Five Domains Paradigm to ensure the dog's welfare.

The requirements apply:

- throughout the whole life of the dog;
- for all types of assistance dogs;
- for all people/caregivers/handlers who are entrusted with a dog at any point during its lifetime.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

prEN 17984-1, *Assistance dogs — Part 1: Vocabulary*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in prEN 17984-1 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp/>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

## 4 Use of the Five Domains Model to support lifetime welfare

### 4.1 General

This section outlines the duties and responsibilities that all handlers shall have towards the dog throughout its lifetime. These shall apply to any dog of any age which is a part of an assistance dog programme or performing as an assistance dog. These responsibilities shall apply to dogs bred specifically for the purpose or who are acquired, from any source, as a puppy or juvenile or later in life. They shall apply equally to dogs trained by an assistance dog service provider, or an owner-trained dog.

### 4.2 Good nutrition (Minimize thirst and hunger and enable eating to be a pleasurable experience)

The dog shall be provided with a diet that is of high quality, nutritionally balanced and appropriate for the individual's health, age, and activity status such that it maintains good weight and body function.

Food shall be provided at least once daily or more often to avoid feelings of hunger.

The dog shall be provided with access to good quality water of sufficient quantity to avoid feelings of thirst.

The handler shall carry a supply of fresh water and bowl for the dog when out with the dog or a bowl for the dog when the handler knows access to water is easy.

The handler shall carry a small meal for the dog when out as necessary.

The handler shall make provisions that eating is an enjoyable experience for the dog.

**prEN 17984-2:2024 (E)****4.3 Good environment (Minimize discomfort and exposure and promote thermal, physical, and other comforts)**

The dog shall be provided with at least one comfortable resting place that is in a quiet and undisturbed location, with an ambient temperature that ensures thermal comfort, a low light level to ensure visual comfort and with clean fresh air.

The dog's resting place shall enable it to rest in any chosen position e.g. curled up, stretched out, on its side, on its back.

The dog shall be provided with frequent daily opportunities to urinate / defecate in appropriate toileting areas.

The dog's living environment shall be safe, and it shall not present any threats specific for the dog, both indoors and outside.

The dog shall be introduced and accustomed to different and unknown environments progressively, taking care that they are not excessively unsafe or stressful, be that due to other people, other animals, machines, or devices. Prolonged exposure to stressful environments shall be minimized.

The handler shall ensure that any equipment worn by the dog fits comfortably. All equipment shall only be worn as long as absolutely necessary.

Handlers shall avoid working with a dog in extreme temperature conditions, on hot surfaces or very cold surfaces. Handlers shall make appropriate provisions such as extra water or protective footwear when conditions warrant.

Where there are kennels, they:

- shall be large enough for the dog to fully stand, stretch and comfortably turn around without restriction;
- shall be large enough to house dogs in pairs with room enough to play and socialise;
- shall be designed and constructed with materials that promote best practice, hygiene, and canine husbandry. Floors shall be self-draining and non-permeable;
- shall provide adequate ventilation and temperature control to ensure the health and avoid thermal discomfort;
- shall be designed to ensure the security of staff and dogs;
- shall be designed to facilitate specific individual kennel functions e.g. breeding, boarding, training, isolation, veterinary care;
- shall provide adequate toileting and free running areas;
- shall have a hygiene protocol in place (see Annex D).

**NOTE** Regarding access, health and safety in the kennelling of canines, local regulations and requirements can apply.

Good Health (*Minimize* breathlessness, nausea, pain, and other aversive experiences and *promote* the pleasures of robustness, vigour, strength, and well-coordinated physical activity). The handler shall be competent in the use of equipment used in the training, handling, or management of the dog.

The handler shall monitor the dog's health status, physical development, and Body Condition Score (BCS) on a continuous basis.